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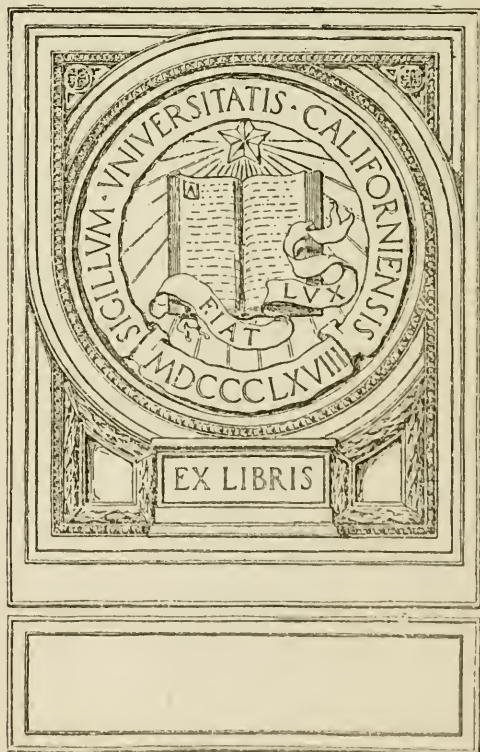
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COLOURED  
STARS



EDITED BY  
E. POWYS MATHERS

GIFT OF  
HORACE W. CARPENTIER









## COLOURED STARS



# Adventurers All.

A SERIES OF YOUNG POETS  
UNKNOWN  
TO FAME.

(B)



Come my friends.....'Tis not too late to seek a  
newer world. It may be that the gulfs will wash  
us down .... It may be we shall touch the happy isles  
Yet our purpose holds...to sail beyond the sunset.

*Ulysses*





# COLOURED STARS

VERSIONS OF  
FIFTY ASIATIC LOVE POEMS

BY  
EDWARD POWYS MATHERS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

TO  
ROSAMOND CROWDY

*Copy*

TO MIMU  
CROWDY

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THERE is an opportunity of knowing in brilliant English translations much of the poetry of China and Japan, of India and Persia; and Arabic poetry is accessible; but I believe this book to be the first general English anthology of Asiatic verse. It is haphazard, as such books must be until some polyglot scholar gives a whole life to the matter. Variety was the only aim possible in a space so small, and therefore I have selected love poems of different centuries and of both primitive and subtle peoples. If readers care to turn to *Anthologie de L'Amour Asiatique*, compiled by Adolphe Thalasso, the late editor of the *Revue Orientale* in Constantinople, they will find a full and clear study of Asia's love poetry and see also how much I owe to this erudite and stimulating authority. M. Thalasso's work first showed me beauty and interest in the songs of almost unknown literatures. In some instances I have translated directly and only from his book, in others I have gratefully taken his direction and traced poems back to their sources. Versions, also, of some of the Chinese poems given here will be found in the incomparable *Livre de Jade* of Mme. Judith Gautier. Reference to the texts of other poems is easily made at various libraries, except with regard to a dozen which I have personally collected. These last have not before, I think, been given a European form.

E. P. M.

London, 1918.

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## SHADE OF THE ORANGE LEAVES.

THE young girl that in her chamber from dawn till eve alone  
Broiders silk flowers on robes, deliciously shudders  
At the unexpected sound of a far flute;  
It seems to her that the voice of a young man is kissing her  
ear.

And when across the oiled paper  
Of the high windows the orange leaves  
Come and touch and make their shadows run on her knees  
It seems to her that a hand is tearing her robe of silk.

From the Chinese of Tin-Tun-Ling.



## THE DALLIANCE OF THE LEOPARDS.

VERY afraid  
I saw the dalliance of the leopards.  
In the beauty of their coats  
They sought each other and embraced.  
Had I gone between them then  
And pulled them asunder by their manes,  
I would have run less risk  
Than when I passed in my boat  
And saw you standing on a dead tree  
Ready to dive and kindle the river.

From the Sanskrit (5th Century).

## WAR SONG.

To bodies straight as palm trees,  
To hips as supple as reeds,  
We prefer the straight staffs of our banners  
Where suppl'y floats our oriflamme of Sun,  
Our banners gilt like cimitars  
That catch the sunset.

To silk hair, red as burning coals,  
To silk hair, black as coals burned out,  
To hair that is dawn or night on girls' heads,  
We prefer the tufts floating in fight,  
Tufts of gold hair or of black hair  
Pulled from the tails of our black horses.

To shining white breasts on virgin bodies,  
Firm as the thrice tried bronze  
And round like marble cups,  
Whence subtle and swooning odours come,  
We prefer the clash of our sabres triple tried  
And the shining of our round shields like mighty cups.

WAR SONG ☞

To the murderous arrows of black eyes  
Made blacker by the bow of brows  
And the kohl of love given and love taken,  
The dear darkness about eyes for love's sake,  
We prefer the murderous arrows  
That stretch our bows in fight.

The arrows of black eyes are tipped with kisses  
Not kept back, not only sped at willing hearts,  
And the tips gash chance hearts often enough  
And give death where no battle is waged . . .  
But the arrows of our bows  
Sow death only among the hardy foe.

To bodies yielding under the struggle of love  
And rearing under the red fire of kisses,  
We prefer our horses tricked with silver and gold,  
Our horses that yield not beneath us  
And bound only at the sight of the blood of battles.

Altai.

## BLACK HAIR.

LAST night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness  
of black hair.

Last night my hands were thrust in the mystery of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the sweetness of  
pomegranates

And among the scents of the harvest above my queen's neck,  
the harvest of black hair;

And my teeth played with the golden skin of her two ears.

Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black  
hair.

—Your kisses went plundering the scents of my harvest, O  
friend,

And the scents laid you drunk at my side. As sleep over-  
came Bahram

In the bed of Sarasya, so sleep overcame you on my bed.

I know one that has sworn your hurt for stealing the roses  
from my cheeks,

Has sworn your hurt even to death, the Guardian of black  
hair.

—Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black  
hair.

My hurt, darling? The sky will guard me if you wish me  
guarded.

But now for my defence, dearest, roll me a cudgel of black  
hair;

BLACK HAIR    ❧

And give me the whiteness of your face, I am hungry for it  
like a little bird.

Still, if you wish me there, loosen me among the wantonness  
of black hair.

Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black  
hair.

Sweet friend, I will part the curtain of black hair and let you  
into the white garden of my breast.

But I fear you will despise me and not look back when you go  
away.

I am so beautiful and so white that the lamp-light faints to see  
my face,

And also God has given me for adornment my heavy black  
hair.

—Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black  
hair.

He has made you beautiful even among his most beautiful;

I am your little slave.    O queen, cast me a little look.

I sent you the message of love at the dawn of day,

But my heart is stung by a snake, the snake of black hair.

Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,

And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black  
hair.

## BLACK HAIR &

—Fear not, dear friend, I am the Charmer,  
My breath will charm the snake upon your heart;  
But who will charm the snake on my honour, my sad honour?  
If you love me, let us go from Pakli. My husband is horrible.

From this forth I give you command over black hair.

—Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black hair.

*Muhammadji* has power over the poets of Pakli,  
He takes tax from the Amirs of great Delhi.  
He reigns over an empire and governs with a sceptre of black hair.

Last night my kisses drowned in the softness of black hair,  
And my kisses like bees went plundering the softness of black hair.

From the Afghan of Muhammadji (19th Century).

## THE GARDEN OF BAMBOOS.

I LIVE all alone, and I am a young girl.  
I write long letters and do not know anyone to send them to.

Most tender things speak in my heart  
And I can only say them to the bamboos in the garden.  
Waiting on my feet, lifting the mat a little behind the door,  
All day I watch the shadows of the people that pass.

A street song of Annam.

## EYES THAT MOVE NOT.

THE ashes are cold in the gold of the  
perfume-brazier. It is shaped like a  
fantastic lion.

Feverishly I fidget under the red wave  
of my bed-clothes, and suddenly I throw  
them from me to get up.

But I have not the courage to undertake  
my hair-dressing, the comb is too heavy  
for my dejection.

I leave the dust to tarnish the precious  
things on my toilet-table.

Already the sun has reached the height of  
the hasp that holds up the curtain.

This grief that I have hidden from all,  
this grief at a departure threatening,  
becomes more bitter still.

Things to say come as far as my lips,  
and I press them back into my heart.



EYES THAT MOVE NOT 𪛗

It is indeed a new thing for me to feel  
a torment; this is not an illness caused  
by getting drunk, nor by the melancholy  
of approaching Autumn.

. . . . .  
Ah, it is finished, it is finished.

He goes away to-day.

If I sang ten thousand times the  
“Stay here by me” song, yet he  
would not stay.

Now my mind has gone on a journey to the  
South; to his country, which is very far away.

Look, see, the mist encumbers my pavilion;  
before my eyes is but the water running round  
about.

It is my grief's sole witness, and may be  
astonished to reflect so long and long the  
stupefaction of my eyes that move not.

Ah, heavier still, hereafter, shall my regard  
weigh down on you, pale mirror; for even as  
I speak it is accomplished, this harm,  
this sadness of eyes that move not.

From the Chinese of Ly-Y-Hane.

## GAZAL.

IF the proud girl I love would cast a glance behind her,  
As down the road she swings in her bright palanquin,  
She would see her lover on foot, with empty hands.

Like the white buds of tuberose in a dark night  
Through the lines of betel shine out her white teeth.

When she puts henna on her hands and dives in the soft river  
One would think one saw fire twisting and running in the water.

From the Hindustani of Dilsoz (18th Century).

## DOUBT.

WILL he be true to me?  
That I do not know.  
But since the dawn  
I have had as much disorder in my thoughts  
As in my black hair.

From the Japanese of Hori-Kawa.

## SONG.

LIKE the fine and silky hair of our goats  
Which climb up very high on the peaks  
Of inaccessible Kara-Koroum,  
So fine and silky is the hair of my girl.

Her eyes are soft as the eyes of the goats  
That call their males on the mountain,  
Her eyes are soft as the eyes of the goats  
That hold the heavy teat to their young.

Her eyes have the colour of topaz  
With which she decks her head and neck  
And this topaz has the soft colour  
Of the soft eyes, very soft eyes of our goats.

Her body apt for work is slight and supple,  
As slight and supple as the bounds  
Which our goats make, when they leap  
On the curved flanks of the summit of Dapsang.

Her cheeks are ever fresh to my lips,  
Fresh like the milk I draw daily  
When the goats come back to the stable  
From the swelling udders that sweep the ground.

Love song of Thibet.

## MY DESIRE.

WHEN in your floating robe,  
Woven with red silk and golden,  
In your floating robe  
Held round your hips  
By a broidered belt,  
Showing all curves  
Of your reckless body,  
You pass me by,  
Eyeing me boldly  
With provocative eyes  
And sending me from your lips  
Teasing smiles,  
Then I feel from your eyes,  
Live like two diamonds  
From the mines of Sing Fos,  
And from the smile of your lips  
That smell so sweet of santal,  
And from your breathing body  
That your long robe shows,  
I feel come to me  
A wild and mad desire  
Long, long to kiss your mouth  
And your teeth painted with betel,

## MY DESIRE ♀

Long, long to possess  
Your loving and breathing body,  
Shown and hidden  
By your long floating robe,  
Woven with red silk and golden.  
And this desire draws me to thee  
As the oaks of Mandalay  
Draw the lightning.

My desire is a stallion  
That must have his mare,  
My desire is a jaguar  
Calling his female,  
My desire is an elephant  
Seeking his mate.  
Your floating robe and your body,  
Your eyes and your smile  
Draw my desire to thee  
As if your hands  
Had passed chains  
Through the rings of my ears  
And dragged me  
Ever behind your feet,  
As life draws breath  
Desire draws me to thee.

When in the month of flowers  
Snow piled on Youmadong  
Falls from the mountain  
In a devouring torrent,  
Sweeps in his passage  
Trees, houses, beasts and men,  
And nothing is able  
To stay his great course  
That grows greater and greater  
And drowns with his waters  
The waters of Kin Douen;  
So violent is my desire  
For thy desire;  
It overturns all things  
In coming to thee,  
It smothers the precepts  
That Godama gave us,  
And drowns all the laws  
Of the Lord of the Elephant.

What does your husband matter?  
What does your family matter?  
I desire you, I long for you  
With a wild and a mad love.

## MY DESIRE ♀

My desire is a torrent  
Falling from the mountain,  
Nothing can stay it.  
It breaks and upheaves.  
I desire you, I long for you  
With a wild and a mad love.  
I want to kiss your eyes,  
I want to kiss your mouth,  
I want to have  
Your desire and your body;  
No torrent is so strong  
As my desire for your body.

The desire drawing me to thee  
Is natural;  
Like the torrent that falls  
From the heights of Youmadong,  
Like the lightning which falls  
On the oaks of Mandalay,  
Of nature natural  
Is the desire that draws me to thee.

From the Burmese of Asmapour (19th Century).



## DISTICH.

A<sup>H</sup>, would that I could hide within my songs  
And, every time you sang them, kiss your lips.

From the Persian of Oumara (10th Century).

## SONG.

S<sup>INCE</sup> you love me and I love you  
The rest matters not;  
I will cut grass in the fields  
And you will sell it for beasts.

Since you love me and I love you  
The rest matters not;  
I will sow maize in the fields  
And you will sell it for people.

Kafiristan.

## THE EMPEROR.

ON a throne of new gold the Son of the Sky  
is sitting among his Mandarins. He shines  
with jewels and is like a sun surrounded by stars.

The Mandarins speak gravely of grave things;  
but the Emperor's thought has flown out by  
the open window.

In her pavilion of porcelain the Empress is  
sitting among her women. She is like a bright  
flower among leaves.

She dreams that her beloved stays too long  
at council, and wearily she moves her fan.

A breathing of perfumed air kisses the face  
of the Emperor.

"My beloved moves her fan, and sends me a  
perfume from her lips."

Towards the pavilion of porcelain walks the  
Emperor, shining with his jewels; and leaves his  
grave Mandarins to look at each other in silence.

From the Chinese of Thou-Fou.

## SONG.

You would climb after nectarines  
In your little green jacket and puffy white drawers;  
So that you fell and I caught you.  
You made as if to break away,  
And then settled wriggling in my arms,  
All your lightness and softness were pressed against me,  
And your face looked up from my breast  
Puckered with amusement.  
It would be something of the sort  
If our clear blue night full of white stars  
Turned to a night of coloured stars—  
Red and purple and green to the zenith,  
And orange and light violet and lemon,  
And bright rose and crimson all about the sky.

From the Chinese (19th Century).

## LOVE SONG.

### I.

THE mountains of Bech-Parma are great enough,  
But my love is greater.

The glaciers that marble their tops are white,  
But your breasts are whiter.

The antelope stricken by my bullet  
Weeps a red blood from its wound

Which dyes with large red flowers  
The field of the blowing jasmine flowers of snow.

Your arms are whiter than the jasmine flowers of snow:  
And your kiss is redder than the blood of the antelope.

The mountains of Bech-Parma are great enough,  
But my love is greater.

### II.

The wind screaming in the forest when the wind of Russia  
blows  
Is milder than the desire that draws me to thee.

## LOVE SONG ❧

Your body smells richer than the resin  
That weeps in the sun from slender pines.

And your mouth has more of odours  
Than mint flowers throw on the air.

When you are by my side, I feel in my body  
A warmth more suave than the softest sun-rays.

And when you go away from me, my sadness  
Is blacker than the lowering night great with storm.

The wind screaming in the forest when the wind of Russia  
blows  
Is milder than the desire that draws me to thee.

Daghestan.

## FARDIYAT.

I'd wish them to put for a talisman on my tomb a pink stone;  
To remind folk of the stone heart and the pink fairness of  
my murderess.

From the Hindustani of Schah Selim (18th Century). .

## LOVING THINGS.

I AM only a man, and yet sometimes  
The green skin of unripened limes  
Or the rose and gold of a naked heel  
Take hold of my heart and make it feel.

And then I'm a god, that tints and blends,  
Loves and laughs and comprehends;  
Hunger and honour are my creed,  
And the splendour of a windy speed.

And then I'm a wolf, that glares and runs  
After the soft four-footed ones;  
Moonlight is shattered on my track  
Ere human voices call me back.

Modern Persian (author unknown).

## BEING TOGETHER AT NIGHT.

BY black water and dark blue water,  
Making the wide tree balance its branches  
Between us and the moon,  
We stood close. As close among the leaves  
Small green diamonds of rain  
And the far stars.

From the Chinese (19th Century).

## THE PEACH FLOWER.

I HAVE plucked from the branch of the peach a flower quite  
little, a flower quite rose;  
And offered it to the loved girl whose lips are smaller and  
more rose than the little flower.

I have taken a swallow with black wings from its nest and  
offered it to the loved girl,  
Whose lips are little and rose and whose brows are like the  
black wings of the swallow.

Next day the little rose flower was faded  
And the swallow, following the soul of the flower, had taken  
flight  
By the window open on to the Blue Mountain.

But on the lips of the loved girl flowers blow always small  
and rose,  
And the black brows over her eyes have no air of wishing to  
beat their wings.

From the Chinese of Tse-Tie.



## LEILA.

OH! Leila!

In your mouth are three things  
A range of Bahrain pearls,  
A goblet of Shiraz wine,  
The musk of Thibet;  
The musk of Thibet is your breath,  
The Shiraz wine the water of your mouth,  
The Bahrain pearls your teeth.  
Oh! Leila!

Oh! Leila!

In your eyes are three things,  
Black diamonds of Hindustan,  
Figured silks of Lahore,  
Flames of Fusi-Yama;  
The mountain flames are their brightness,  
The figured silks of Lahore their dusk,  
The black diamonds of Hindustan their colour.  
Oh! Leila!

Oh! Leila!

In your heart are three things,  
All the yellow cobras of Burma,  
All the deadly fungi of Bengal,  
All Nepal's poison flowers;  
The poison flowers are your vows,  
The deadly fungi your kisses,  
The yellow cobras your deceits.  
Oh! Leila!

Song of Nepal.

## LOOKING AT THE MOON.

VERY far from your eyes  
My loving eyes regard  
The sky of stars.  
Ah, that the moon might be  
Changed to a mirror.

From the Japanese of a Courtezan  
of Nagasaki.

## SONG.

DEW on the bamboos,  
Cooler than dew on the bamboos  
Is putting my cheek against your breasts.

The pit of green and black snakes,  
I would rather be in the pit of green and black snakes  
Than be in love with you.

From the Sanskrit (5th Century).

## A LOVE RAPTURE.

ROUND the Palace of Waters gently the wind  
moves the flowers of the water-lilies.

On the highest terrace of Kou-Sou one sees  
the King of Lou lazily lying.

And before him Sy-Che, after whom beauty was  
named, dances with lovely grace of delicate  
weak gestures.

Then she laughs that she is so voluptuously  
weary, and languidly leans to the East on  
the white jade of the royal bed.

From the Chinese of Li-Tai-Pe.

## ENGLISH GIRL.

I THAT lived ever about you  
Never touched you, Lilian;  
You came from far away  
And devils with twitching faces  
Had all their will of you  
For gold.  
But I saw your little feet in your bedroom,  
Your little heathen shoes I kept so bright.  
For they regarded not your feet, Lilian,  
But I regarded.  
Your little heathen stockings were mine to carry  
And to set out and to wash.  
They regarded not your feet,  
But I that lived ever about you  
Never touched you, Lilian.  
Their faces twitch more this frosty morning;  
They have put you in a heathen box  
And hidden your feet and carried you out in the frosty  
morning.  
They have passed with you over the foggy brook  
And look like big blue men in the mist on the other side.

## ENGLISH GIRL &

Now only the mist and the water remain.  
They never regarded your feet,  
But I regarded, Lilian.  
Their faces ever twitched,  
But for the seven years since I saw you  
My face did not change.  
They never regarded your warm feet,  
But I regarded.

From the Chinese (19th Century).

## GAZAL.

SEEING me come the heavenly girl fled very fast,  
And ran surpassing fast, her tongue between her teeth.  
I followed, and the heavenly girl at the noise of my following  
Pulled back the leaf of the door and hid behind.  
I followed, and for her savagery fast, fast I scolded her;  
Till all ashamed and drawing back she could not answer me.  
Why starts the morning cock his chant so fast, so fast?  
An evil cock, an evil chant to shatter my delight . . .  
And this song is only as threads of smoke to the heavenly girl,  
That vanish surpassing fast upon the winds of Spring.

From the Hindustani of Inscha (18th Century).

## LOVER'S JEALOUSY.

ALTHOUGH you are as beautiful as Kashmir at dawn  
I am not jealous, O my wanton bird,  
Of the lover that you have chosen, who takes my place  
To-night upon your bed. You can ask me to your feasting  
to-night.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

Fear not. I will bring things to eat and things to drink;  
Since love makes the belly hungry and the throat dry.  
And I'll sing my finest ballads, for which you used to pay  
Your mendicant of love with diamonds of tears, pearls of  
laughter and rubies of kisses.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

I will serve up to you all panting, all hot, and all crisp,  
My heart which your spurns have made into roast lamb;  
And for your thirst I will give you in a cup  
In place of milk all the blood of my veins that you wish empty  
of my love.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

I'll sing to your handsome the words you love, words that  
distilled in your ears  
Make you all ripe to offer the cup of kisses,  
Words I made for you yesterday, the beggar at your door,  
Which to-day you want to hear cried by other lips.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

I will sing him a ghazel of the learned way  
To loose your hair and unravel your heavy black tresses,  
Heavy with perfumes and little coins, with flowers and  
pearl-encrusted combs,  
Heavy above all with the odour of your body.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

Oh, this scent floating from your neck, your breasts, your  
arms;  
That circles about your thighs and your little belly;  
This scent that is fed for ever and for ever  
From two shady flasks under your bright arms.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

Oh, this hot scent that curdles my desire,  
Odour of honey and santal, of milk and rose water,  
And over all your little hot skin under great love  
Breathing of amber.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

## LOVER'S JEALOUSY &

I will sing him the very slow way  
Of plucking date-sweet kisses from your lips,  
Of plucking from your breasts all blowing flowers, carnations  
and roses,  
And from between your breasts all fruits, oranges, peaches  
and strawberries.

I carry the scent of your body about with me.

And to place his head on your shoulder, O little bird,  
Where, big and proud, your grain of beauty lies,  
Like a black carnation in a desert of snow,  
Like a black star in daylight.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

My songs will teach him the things that make you mad,  
What twistings you love, my serpent,  
They'll murmur him what languors break your feline limbs,  
And above all how to be loved by thee.  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

I want to light in his heart the flame that burns in me,  
To see him suffer to-morrow, when you leave him for me,  
All the torments that I have to-day.  
You can ask *Rahchan* to your feasting to-night,  
*Rahchan* will bring things to eat and things to drink . . .  
I carry the scent of your body about with me.

From the Afghan of Mirza Rahchan Kayil.



## SPRING COLD.

IN the melancholy enclosure

The wind leans, and drags at the threads of fine rain,

It is a good thing the double doors are shut.

The grace of the willows, the frailness of the  
flowers, these bow down before the capricious  
weather that rains towards the time of "Cold Feasts."

But whatever the weather, it is always difficult  
to find the balanced harmony of verse.

In the meanwhile: this much poetry is finished.

. . . . .  
What sweet thing may sustain, what sweet thing  
may console him who wakes from drunkenness? . . .  
the drunkenness of poetry, which is other than  
the drunkenness of wine? . . .

The wild swans have just passed.

Ah, I have a thousand sad things which I would  
confide to these rapid riders.

SPRING COLD 春

In these days the Spring cold can be felt  
in the upper storey.

On four sides the blinds are down in front  
of the windows.

I am too dissatisfied to go and lean on  
the jade balustrade.

The coverlet is cold. All the perfume is burned away.

I wake from my last dream.

Why are not people with great sorrows  
forbidden to dream?

The colourless dew is falling into the water.

The trees are getting green again.

Quite a lot of people will rejoice to see  
the Spring come back.

The sun is coming out, the mist is drifting away.

To-day I suppose I will have to look at some more  
fine weather.

From the Chinese of Ly-Y-Hane.

## CLIMBING UP TO YOU.

I SANG of a glass of crystal shadows lifted to mine  
With shadows of rose lips upon the rim;  
I sang of love kissed asleep by other girls  
That after his rest would have as sweet a waking;  
I sang of my life smashed like a hawk's egg  
Against the granite stairs.  
Now that I can climb  
Pardon me two things—  
That I gave not, round the beauty of your feet,  
Bright coloured songs to moan for ever more,  
That now, climbing, once or twice  
Being weary I shade my mouth and sing  
Of my heart's blood sweetened to a red grape  
For you to bite and swallow and have done.

From the Arabic of John Duncan.

## GRIEF.

I F grief like fire should give out smoke  
Ever it would be night on earth.

From the Persian of Schahid (10th Century).

## SONG.

IF you love God, take your mirror between your hands and  
look

How beautiful are your breasts with their two russet berries.  
At sight of them, stricken, drunken, I cannot make a distinction

Between them and white roses beaten in white snow.  
How beautiful are your breasts with their two russet berries.

No soul could be strong against your so bright eyes,  
My desire hungers, for the kisses of one night did not fill it.  
For love of God, take your mirror between your hands and  
judge

If a man could tire in looking on your face.  
My desire hungers, for the kisses of one night did not fill it;  
How beautiful are your breasts with their two russet berries.

From the Turkish of Mahmoud Djellaladine Pacha  
(19th Century).

## LAST TIME.

ONE more time  
Before I quit the world  
I want to see you,  
To carry with me down there  
Your face of love, O my love.

From the Japanese of Idzumi-Siki-Bu  
(10th Century).

## MOKCHA.

(Supreme Happiness.)

LIKE the bright drop  
Which, from the perfumed womanhood  
Of loving night,  
Night amorous ever,  
Tireless in her couplings  
With the body of the world,  
Falls in the virgin breast  
Of a rose, and straightway  
Ravishes her and shows  
In its tiny globe  
All the work of Brahma,  
All the sky and all the earth;

So the drop of the dew  
Of thy love, which trembles  
On the petals of my heart,  
Reflects in my love  
The sky of the soul,  
So sought Nirvana;

My love is Mokcha  
 Making me, from on earth,  
 Taste the high savour  
 Of immaterial joy.  
 Through thy love I have felt  
 That my essence is god-like  
 And that I am part  
 Of the world's Creator.

From the Burmese of Megdan (19th Century).

## GAZAL.

WHEN you have thrown torture and desire, O cruel child,  
 Into your lover's heart with lissom coqueties,  
 You sit down, calm and unmoved and never noticing,  
 And put desirous order into the loosened tangles of your hair.

And I watching you think of a placid pilgrim  
 That has come to camp and sits taking his ease,  
 With never a thought for his fellows on the road.  
 And I watching you think of the unconscious earth  
 Carelessly drinking the tears from wounded hearts.

From the Hindustani of Isch (18th Century).

## VAI! TCHODJOUKLAREUM!

AH! my children! do you know Djemileh,  
The turquoise, the carnation, the most beautiful girl  
in Bagdad?

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! her face has aspects of the moon,  
And in each of her eyes there is a sun.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! sometimes she leaves her vest unfastened,  
Forgetting—who knows?—that it hides her breasts.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! she has round rosy paps  
Standing straight out like peaches not yet ripe.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! look at the curve of her back;  
She might crack nuts below her waist there.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! what shall be said of her thighs,  
What so good to dream of as her thighs?

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! Djemileh has just passed  
Appetising and gilt like a cake for Ramazan.

Ah! my children!

VAI! TCHODJOUKLAREUM! &

Ah! my children! she comes down from the mountains  
With her arms full of flowers, those little flowers that never  
die.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! the wind makes cling to her skin  
Her rose robe, and makes her look quite naked.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! Djemileh comes to us to sell  
The little flowers that never die, plucked in the mountain.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! when she sells her flowers  
The bright eyes of the lads bathe her and devour her.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! eyes that pass through her robe  
And do not count the money she gives back.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! feeling hands that tickle her  
And she laughs with all her teeth, pulling back her veil.

Ah! my children!

Ah! my children! Djemileh has sold the flowers from the  
mountain;

And added to her dowry for marrying the hill boy she loves.

Ah! my children!

Kurdistan.



## THE MIRROR.

I HAVE saddled your raven horse with nervous limbs,  
I have polished your sword, your rifle, and your lance.  
Go, soldier, since you must; go, my eyes' joy:  
But in your fights do not forget I love you.

As in the tiny mirror  
Which you brought me from Kiachta Fair,  
Promise that my face  
Will be mirrored in your thought.

Before you go, make this promise—  
To watch every evening at the third hour  
The moon flashing in the sky  
Like a great mirror of silver.

Before you go, I make this promise too—  
To watch every evening at the third hour  
The moon flashing in the sky  
Like a great mirror of silver.

## THE MIRROR & :

Thus every night, I'll seem to see your eyes,  
Thus every night, you'll seem to see my eyes,  
As in a silver mirror  
In the moon, flashing in the sky.

Who knows but that perhaps the moon,  
Moved to see our eyes hunting each other every night,  
May consent really to change  
Into a great mirror of silver.

Then I could watch you every night  
Fighting on your raven horse;  
And you could tell yourself every night  
That I was keeping my promise.

Street Song of Eastern Mongolia.

## FARDIYAT.

THE heartless girl, that was the cause of Saquib's death, saw  
his bier passing  
And dared to ask of its sorrowful convoy the name of the man  
they were carrying to earth.

From the Hindustani of Saquib (18th Century).

## AT THE EAST GATE.

At the East Gate of the City are young women,  
Gracious and light as clouds in Spring time;  
But it does not move me that they have the lightness of  
clouds—

Under her thick veil and the whiteness of her robe, my love  
gives me all joy.

At the West Gate of the City are young women,  
Sparkling and beautiful like the flowers of Spring time;  
But it does not move me that they have the sparkling beauty  
of flowers—

Under her thick veil and the whiteness of her robe, my love  
gives me all joy.

From the Chinese Shi King (1776 B.C.)

## SUBMISSION.

WHEN you have bathed in the river  
On the moon's third day,  
You make yourself, ah, so the more to be desired  
By slipping on a robe the colour of your body.  
Tell me, child, are three baskets of saffron enough  
To colour your breasts and your arms and your face?

No other girl knows, like you, how to entice me,  
Walking alone in the shadows of the palm trees.  
None has your tickling gestures, your enflaming eyes—  
So young, so smooth, and so flower fresh,  
You must have more men silly about you  
Than there are corners in your bedroom to hide them.

In the morning when I come to see you under the verandah  
Just for the pleasure of talking to you;  
Or in the evening when I curry favour with the poulterer  
Just for the pleasure of feeling myself near you;  
Or at night when my hand seeks to clasp you  
Through the hole pierced in the planking by your bed;  
Your mother can say all she likes,  
Reproaches, insults, swear-words. I accept all in advance.  
But I conjure you do not refuse me  
A quite small corner of your bedroom in which to hide.

From the Siamese.

## IN THE PALACE.

WHAT rigorous calm! What almost holy silence!  
· All the doors are shut, and the beds of flowers  
are giving out scent; discreetly, of course. . . .

Two women that lean against each other, stand to  
the balustrade of red marble on the edge of the  
terrace.

One of them wishes to speak, to confide to her  
friend the secret sorrow that is agonizing her heart.

She throws an anxious glance at the motionless leaves,  
and because of a paroquet with iridescent wings  
that perches on a branch, she sighs and is silent.

From the Chinese of Thou-Sin-Yu.

## A THING REMEMBERED.

I'LL not forget the warm blue night when my bold girl,  
Whose kissing lips smell sweet of honey and of rose water,

Came softly to my room, and my room glowed  
As if the moon at her bright full had entered to me.

“ Press me in your arms,” she said. “ All that your love demands  
Ask and obtain. My old watching woman is far away.”

I pressed her in my arms, and said: “ Your robe is a curtain.  
Wherefore a curtain between me and thee, violet joy of my heart? ”

And so saying, I began to undo some parts of her robe.  
She looked smiling at me and I, also smiling, unloosed and unloosed.

“ My joy, the flower in her bud pleases me not:  
And fruit hanging under leaves delights me not.

“ My sword I love not in its sheath, it is no pleasure  
To see the stars of night hidden behind clouds.”

From the Arabic.

## THE MOST VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

PLUCK the most beautiful apricot from this tree  
And place it on silk in a coffer of sandal-wood;  
At the end of three days the silk  
Will be stained by the juice of the fruit.

Choose the most virtuous woman from this world,  
Place her image in the coffer of your heart,  
Even on the same instant your heart  
Will be soiled with bad thoughts.

Popular Song of Manchuria.

## THE MEETING.

A SUMMER's night I met my girl on the path  
That leads straight to her dwelling and straight to my  
tent.

We were alone, we two, without watchers or informers,  
Far from the tribe, far from jealous eyes and spying ears  
and harming tongues.

I laid my face on the ground, my brow a footstool for my girl.  
She said: "Open your heart with joy, we are without  
watchers;  
Come press your lips to my veil."

But my lips would not consent to it.  
I felt that I had two honours to guard,  
My girl's and mine.

And, as was my desire, we were all night together,  
Near to each other, far from the tribe and spying eyes.

And it seemed that I was master  
Of all the kingdoms of the world, and that the elements  
Obeyed me as slaves.

From the Arabic of Ibn-el-Fared (1220 A.D.)



## THE DRUNKEN ROSE.

HAS not the night been as a drunken rose  
Without a witness? And the girl of bloom  
Has given up all. What little cries of joy!  
What wanton words repeated!  
But white dawn shows the rose and green pet bird,  
The mighty talker and awake all night.  
Hark! The old woman comes; he will tell all.  
What shall she, fluttering? Snap small rubies off  
From the bright ear-rings, facets sharp as steel:  
These with the seed-pulp of the passion-fruit,  
His sweet prepared breakfast, mingle featly . . .  
So, busy jargonier, silent for ever more.

From the Sanskrit of Amarou (1st Century).

## THE TRYST.

IN thy presence my arms, my hands, my lips, all my being,  
Tremble as tremble the leaves  
Of the cinnamon-apples shaken by the wind.

—The leaves of the cinnamon-apple do not tremble, O my  
love.

They shiver under the caress of the wind  
Which drinks deep of their perfumed kisses.

Come with me to-night under the cinnamon-apples  
And like their leaves you will shiver under my caress,  
And like the wind I will drink deep of your perfumed kisses.

I will come. But what will you give me for my kisses?

—For your kisses I offer you my kisses.

What will you give me for my heart?

—For your heart I offer you my heart.

What will you give me for my love?

—For your love I offer you my life.

I accept your kisses and your heart and your life;

And I give in exchange myself to be all yours.

And all trembling this night I will come to offer you my kisses

Under the cinnamon-apples caressed by the wind

And in the wind that drinks deep of their perfumed kisses.

By an unknown author of Camboja.

## ZULMA.

I SEEMED to see behind a half-opened door  
Two roses on a rose-tree.  
I was mistaken.  
It was not really two roses  
But the curved cheeks of Zulma.

I seemed to see behind a half-opened door  
Two white lily flowers.  
I was mistaken.  
It was not really two white lily flowers  
But the curved breasts of Zulma.

I seemed to see behind a half-opened door  
Two red blossoms of the passion-flower.  
I was mistaken.  
It was not really two red blossoms of the passion-flower  
But the curved lips of Zulma.

Women or flowers, what matter? Tell the girl  
That my gardens are great and great my women's quarters.  
There grow the red and the rose and the white flowers,  
And the light women and the dark women, with skins of amber  
and ivory,  
And that I wish to pluck the rose flowers of her cheeks  
And the red flowers of her lips and the white flowers of her  
breasts.

Street Song of Baluchistan.

## RUBAIYAT.

THEY'VE assured me that Paradise is full of girls,  
They've assured me that I'll find wine and honey in Paradise.

Well then, why forbid me wine and girls down here,  
Seeing that up there my reward will be girls and wine?

From the Persian of Omar Khayam (10th Century).

## PICTURE.

I SEE the snowy winter sky through the old arch;  
And in the middle the line of one tree.  
A flight of crows comes just above the tree,  
Sweeping to left and right, and tailing out behind.  
I think of you.

From the Japanese (18th Century).

## WHITE.

I THOUGHT that it was snowing  
Flowers. But, no. It was this young lady  
Coming towards me.

From the Japanese of Yori-Kito  
(19th Century).

## SONG.

I CAME upon you rolling in the grass,  
Like a young beast you rolled over and over,  
Flinging your legs wide,  
Flinging your arms wide,  
And rubbing against the dew.  
I came upon you rolling in the grass  
And crept away.

From the Sanskrit (5th Century).

## THE RED LOTUS.

A FLOWER opens down under the deep water . . .  
the deep water.

I take a cord and throw it towards the flower  
whose roots are so far down.

Whose roots are so far down.

The mystery of the deep darkness is troubled,  
the repose ceases, the ripple spreads very far.

With my cord I try to snare the lotus; as if his  
heart were deep there in the water.

The sun floats on the extreme edge of the sky,  
he goes down, he goes out, he falls into the night  
and drowns.

He falls into the night and drowns.

. . . . .  
I climb up again to the higher storey; I stop  
in front of my mirror; a tragic and wasted face!

THE RED LOTUS ❷

A tragic and wasted face!

The plants are setting about to become green again,  
and to put out new shoots.

How have I managed, without hope, to reach this day?

From the Chinese of Ly-Y-Hane.

## ENVOY.

THE night before last night  
I heard that to make songs to girls  
And to make prayers to God  
Were of equal value  
In the eye of time;  
Provided, that is,  
That the prayers  
Are sufficiently beautiful.

From the Burmese.



## FOUR NOTES.

*Black Hair* (p. 13). For many of the forty years of his life, which closed in madness in 1890, Muhammadji, the greatest poet of Afghanistan, was working out sentences in prison for violent brawling and heavy drinking. In the last stanza of this poem the folly of grandeurs is easily detected; and in all his work, mingled with that drowsy music which was his greatness, is a vertigo from over the depths of insanity.

*English Girl* (p. 34). This poem, which could only have been thought in a Chinese brain, is yet in form very wide of modern Chinese tradition. Its author, who also wrote *Song* (p. 26) and *Being Together at Night* (p. 29), is an American born Chinese, a valet by profession, and by instinct an artist both in words and colours.

*Lover's Jealousy* (p. 36). Mirza (Prince) Rahchan Kayil was the pen-name of Hussein Izzat Rafi, a popular contemporary of Muhammadji. Being a fine linguist and tireless traveller, he explored the wildest parts of Asia and the most ordinary capitals of Europe, searching out inspiration for a mystical work which should reconcile all religions. At the age of 48 he was hanged for supposed complicity in a plot against the Shah of Persia.

*Climbing Up to You* (p. 41). John Duncan died in his middle age this year, and left only the short-lived memory of a brilliant talker and a few strange poems in the language of his adoption. How far he had identified his being with the Arabs, among whom he lived and had married, may be gathered from his serious use of the expression "A tourist, pure and simple," when speaking of the late Sir Richard Burton. This poem is the only one of his which seemed to be generally comprehensible without those verbal annotations which it was his custom sometimes to supply when reading.

**The Riverside Press**

PRINTED BY H. O. HOUGHTON & CO.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
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